

been a part of this. I actually was here at a pretty dramatic floor debate on this issue in 2005, in which some people wanted to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for drilling, even to the degree that they put that as a rider on the Defense bill. We were able to stop that. I think that was the will of Congress, that they did not want to see drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

But we have had this discussion since 1960, when Dwight Eisenhower set aside originally 9 million acres, and in 1980, thanks to the work of Scoop Jackson, Congress passed the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, which expanded the refuge to 19 million acres.

I have visited the refuge. I do believe it is a critical habitat for wildlife and the Gwich'in people who called this the sacred place where life begins. It is truly special. I do think we have had many discussions about this. This action probably will not be the last of them, but I do applaud the President for taking the Arctic refuge, which is habitat for 45 different species of land animals, 36 different species of fish, 180 species of birds—and has the greatest variety of plant and animal life of any park or refuge in the polar Arctic. I do believe it is an ecosystem and an ecosystem that is unlike anything else we have in the United States.

So I am proud the President has taken what has been a refuge that was lacking a plan and has now put a wilderness plan in place or the elements of what it will take to preserve those various species and animals and that very special place.

I know my colleague feels very strongly about the President's announcement. I think a refuge plan that is based on science and public comment—we have had a plan, but this is the first plan to say we are going to protect this area. It recommends 12 million acres of refuge, including the coastal plain as wilderness. It is one of the most pristine and unique public places.

I am confident America can meet our energy needs without opening the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. I am convinced we can come up with an energy strategy that is much more compelling for the future of the United States, one in which we can lead and one in which we can help other countries, whether it is what the President did with China in getting an agreement or working with India or all the things we are doing to try to be a leader in what is energy efficiency and ways to impact the marketplace so consumers can look for cleaner, more efficient uses of fuel.

So this is going to be a continuing debate in this Congress between a 19th century view of energy policy and a 21st century view of energy policy. I would ask my colleagues to think about these countries the President has just recently visited. He went to China. No one thinks China's air standard is what we should have in the

United States. India has had its own challenges. They have hundreds of millions of people who are without electricity needs.

So the question is whether these sources of energy are going to be that solution, whether a dirty source of fossil fuel is going to be the solution or whether we can work together on cleaner energy solutions. I think we can do that.

In fact, I am excited the United States can be a leader in these technologies, which will result in more job growth, just as those previous energy bills did when we worked together for higher fuel efficiency standards, for more energy efficiency, to come up with more sources of diversified fuel. I am very confident we are going to, in the next few years, usher in a new era of aviation.

We have already proven we can fly airplanes with a 50-50 drop in jet fuel. We now have to prove we can manufacture those large sources and get planes flying on that. What a great accomplishment that will be in reducing carbon emissions and giving the flying public and those airlines something that is much more affordable than what we have been dealing with for the last 10 or 15 years.

I look forward to my colleague and I working tomorrow—some tonight and a little bit starting early tomorrow—on how we move forward with this legislation. I know my colleague and I see a path forward. Similar to any two people who are trying to manage a bill on the floor, we also know we have all of our colleagues to work with because nothing in the Senate operates unless it operates through our process and working collaboratively or, I should say, it can work, it is just going to take a very long time.

So we pledge to work in the next few days to try to get an amendment process that will not be prematurely cut off after 1 hour of a pending bill but will come to terms, and hopefully our colleagues will work with us to limit the number of those amendments and we can move forward to legislation that we think will help our economy grow.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Alaska.

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I know our colleague from Delaware is wishing to speak. If I may just proceed to do the closeout and he would be able to speak after that.

MORNING BUSINESS

Ms. MURKOWSKI. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to a period of morning business, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

CENTRAL ILLINOIS XPRESS BASKETBALL TEAM

Mr. DURBIN. Mr. President, I wish to recognize the remarkable strength and

spirit of the Central Illinois Xpress basketball team and its coach Tariq Toran.

As the only team of girls in an all-boys fifth grade basketball league in Springfield, IL, the Central Illinois Xpress has defied the odds and emerged as a powerhouse in the Illinois AAU boys' league. With an impressive record of 8 wins and 2 losses in the first half of the season, Coach Toran and the Central Illinois Xpress girls have made a name for themselves not just back at home, but across the Nation.

Strong, confident, and determined, the team comprised of nine girls ages 10 and 11 years old do not shy away from hard work and tough competition on the basketball court. With a series of two-on-one drills coupled with push-ups and sprints, these girls know how to practice hard and play hard. The Xpress girls use their summers to compete in a higher division comprised of older girls, which helps prepare them to play against tough teams during the season.

This tireless preparation and fearless attitude brought Coach Toran to sign the girls up for the all-boys' league this year. So far, the team's success has been undeniable. With their dribble drives, crisp passes, and methodical game play, the Central Illinois Xpress players have racked up more than enough wins to show the boys, and the community, that they are a force to be reckoned with this season.

These girls know what it means to push themselves for excellence, to fight for something against the odds, and to prove themselves to those, including some of the boys they are playing, who don't expect a girls team to be strong and play smart, aggressive ball.

It is my pleasure to wish these fifth-grade girls in Springfield the best of luck in the second half of this season.

RECOGNIZING THE VERMONT STATE POLICE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, during the closing days of the 112th Congress, and for the duration of the 113th Congress, I had the privilege of serving the Senate as the President pro tempore. It of course was a great honor, and a humbling one, to serve the Senate and to represent Vermont in this position. With this designation, because of the matter of presidential succession procedures, I was assigned a security detail. I have spoken before about the outstanding work of the U.S. Capitol Police, and about how much Marcelle and I appreciate the sacrifices they made in the course of their service.

Today I want to thank the Vermont State Police for their outstanding service and steadfast support during my time as President pro tempore. With their extensive and comprehensive knowledge of Vermont's unique landscape and communities, the Vermont State Police coordinated with the U.S. Capitol Police and provided essential guidance, information and support. I